

CLAIMS

1 1. A method for handling database locks comprising:
2 detecting a new query from a new administrator for a set of database records
3 that are associated with a potential new lock;
4 determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being
5 authorized to acquire said new lock;
6 attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator has a chance of
7 being authorized; and
8 informing said new administrator of a failure to acquire said new lock if a prior
9 lock has already been acquired due to a prior query by a prior administrator.

1 2. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2 informing said new administrator includes identifying the prior administrator.
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1 3. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 2 wherein
2 informing said new administrator includes providing contact information for said prior
3 administrator.
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1 4. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 further
2 comprising informing said new administrator that said new administrator is not
3 authorized to acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator has
4 no chance of acquiring said new lock.

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1 5. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 further
2 comprising permitting access to said set of database records if said new administrator
3 acquires said new lock, and designating said new administrator as a prior
4 administrator and said new lock as a prior lock.

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1 6. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 5 further
2 comprising releasing said prior lock after said prior administrator has checked out
3 from said set of database records.

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1 7. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2 determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3 acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator has write authorization
4 for said set of database records.

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1 8. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2 determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3 acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator has a maximum
4 database access authorization.

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1 9. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2 determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3 acquire said new lock includes whether said set of database records personally pertain
4 to said new administrator .

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1 10. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2 determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3 acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator is organizationally
4 authorized.

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1 11. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2 determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3 acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator is currently authorized.

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1 12. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks comprising:

3 a code segment detecting a new query from a new administrator for a set of
4 database records that is associated with a potential new lock;

5 a code segment determining whether said new administrator has any chance of
6 being authorized to acquire said new lock;

7 a code segment attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator
8 has a chance of being authorized; and

9 a code segment informing said new administrator of a failure to acquire said
10 new lock if a prior lock has already been acquired due to a prior query by a prior
11 administrator.

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1 13. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein informing said new
3 administrator includes identifying the prior administrator.

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1 14. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 13 wherein informing said new
3 administrator includes providing contact information for said prior administrator.

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1 15. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 further comprising a code segment
3 informing said new administrator that said new administrator is not authorized to
4 acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator has no chance of
5 acquiring said new lock.

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1 16. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 further comprising a code segment
3 permitting access to said set of database records if said new administrator acquires
4 said new lock, and designating said new administrator as a prior administrator and
5 said new lock as a prior lock.

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1 17. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 16 further comprising a code segment
3 releasing said prior lock after said prior administrator has checked out from said set of
4 database records.

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1 18. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new

3 administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes
4 whether said new administrator has write authorization for said set of database
5 records.

1 19. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new
3 administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes
4 whether said new administrator has a maximum database access authorization.

1 20. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new
3 administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes
4 whether said set of database records personally pertain to said new administrator .

1 21. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new
3 administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes
4 whether said new administrator is organizationally authorized.

1 22. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new
3 administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes
4 whether said new administrator is currently authorized.

1 23. A method for making a preliminary determination as to whether a
2 database administrator has authorization to access a set of database records
3 comprising:

4 determining that a database administrator has no chance of being authorized to
5 access a designated set of database records if said database administrator does not
6 have one or more of: (a) write authorization for said designated set of database
7 records; (b) if said designated set of database records are personal database records of
8 said database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of interest, (c) if the
9 database administrator is not organizationally permitted to access said set of database
10 records; or (d) if said database administrator is not currently authorized; and

11 determining that a database administrator has a chance of being authorized if
12 said database administrator has one or more of: (a) write authorization and maximum
13 administrator authorization; and (b) write authorization, not maximum authorization,
14 not if said designated set of database records are personal database records of said
15 database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of interest, if the database
16 administrator is not organizationally permitted to access said set of database records,
17 and currently authorized.

1 24. A computer readable media including program code segments for
2 making a preliminary determination as to whether a database administrator has
3 authorization to access a set of database records comprising:

4 a code segment determining that a database administrator has no chance of
5 being authorized to access a designated set of database records if said database
6 administrator does not have one or more of: (a) write authorization for said designated
7 set of database records; (b) if said designated set of database records are personal
8 database records of said database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of
9 interest, (c) if the database administrator is not organizationally permitted to access
10 said set of database records; or (d) if said database administrator is not currently
11 authorized; and

12 a code segment determining that a database administrator has a chance of being
13 authorized if said database administrator has one or more of: (a) write authorization
14 and maximum administrator authorization; and (b) write authorization, not maximum
15 authorization, not if said designated set of database records are personal database
16 records of said database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of interest, if
17 the database administrator is not organizationally permitted to access said set of
18 database records, and currently authorized.

1 25. A database system including locks comprising:
2 means for detecting a new query from a new administrator for a set of database
3 records capable that is associated with a new lock;
4 means for determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being
5 authorized to acquire said new lock;
6 means for attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator has a
7 chance of being authorized; and
8 means for informing said new administrator of a failure to acquire said new
9 lock if a prior lock has already been acquired due to a prior query by a prior
10 administrator.

1 26. A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 wherein
2 informing said new administrator includes means for identifying the prior
3 administrator.

1 27. A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 wherein
2 informing said new administrator includes means for providing contact information
3 for said prior administrator.

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1 28. A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 further
2 comprising means for informing said new administrator that said new administrator is
3 not authorized to acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator
4 has no chance of acquiring said new lock.

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1 29. A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 further
2 comprising means for permitting access to said set of database records if said new
3 administrator acquires said new lock, and means for designating said new
4 administrator as a prior administrator and said new lock as a prior lock.

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1 30. A database system comprising:
2 a plurality of administrator terminals;
3 a database server capable of being accessed by a plurality of administrators
4 associated with said plurality of administrator terminals, said database server
5 including, at least in part, a database program capable of managing a plurality of
6 records that may be grouped into sets of records, said database program including the
7 functionality of:

8 (a) detecting a new query from a new administrator at a new administrator
9 terminal for a set of database records capable that is associated with a new lock;

10 (b) determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being
11 authorized to acquire said new lock;

12 (c) attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator has a
13 chance of being authorized; and

14 (d) informing said new administrator at said new administrator terminal of a
15 failure to acquire said new lock if a prior lock has already been acquired due to a prior
16 query by a prior administrator on a prior administrator station.
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1 31. A database system as recited in claim 30 wherein informing said new
2 administrator includes identifying, on said new administrator station, the prior
3 administrator.
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1 32. A database system as recited in claim 31 wherein informing said new
2 administrator includes, on said new administrator station, providing contact
3 information for said prior administrator.
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1 33. A database system as recited in claim 30 further comprising informing
2 said new administrator on said new administrator station that said new administrator is
3 not authorized to acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator
4 has no chance of acquiring said new lock.
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1 34. A database system as recited in claim 30 further comprising permitting
2 access to said set of database records via said new administrator terminal if said new
3 administrator acquires said new lock, and designating said new administrator as a
4 prior administrator and said new lock as a prior lock.